(c) the number of officials awarded in this regards;

(d) the number of officers who have not been awarded prizes inspite of announcements for the same; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) Smuggled goods and foreign currency worth Rs. 202.43 crores have been confiscated by the Customs officials posted at different airports in the country during the last three years till the end of the year 2001. 520 persons have been arrested in this connection.

(c) 'Nil', as no awards are given to Customs officials for confiscation of smuggled goods. However, rewards (*ex-gratia* payments) are given to Customs officials for seizure of contraband goods, detection of duty evasion, etc., as per reward policy framed by the Government.

(d) and (e) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Revenue collection

1432. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total collection of revenue both direct and indirect taxes during the current financial year ending June, 2002;

(b) whether it is above/below the target set in the budget;

(c) what steps are being taken to increase the tax collection across the country; and

(d) whether Government propose to bring many sections of the people into the tax bracket and if so, how it is likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Sir, the total collection of direct and indirect taxes upto June, 2002 during the current financial year is Rs. 39173.87 crore.

(b) The target set in the Budget is for the entire financial year 2002-2003. Hence, no comparison can be made at this stage.

(c) A number of steps have been taken to increase tax collection which include closer monitoring of collections, plugging leakage of revenue through anti-smuggling and anti-evasion measures; expeditious disposal of tax adjudications and appeals; finalisation of provisional assessments; simplification of tax collection procedures to improve tax compliance; restructuring of the administrative setup and expediting computerisation of operations.

(d) Several of steps have been taken to widen the tax base and bring more people into the tax bracket, which include the one-by-six scheme, compulsory filing of returns by companies, focussed surveys and searches, and extending the applicability of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) provisions to cover various taxable financial transactions.

Finalization of debt swap operation

1433. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have finalized the contours of a massive debt swap operation which is expected to lower the Central Government's current year's gross fiscal deficit by almost 1 per cent of the GDP;

(b) whether the scheme is for States to prepay Rs. 85,000 crores of high cost debt to the Central Government over three years and borrow fresh money at cheaper rates; and

(c) if so, what are the details of this plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ANANT GANGARAM GEETE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of India have constituted a High Powered Committee under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Finance and Company Affairs for assessing the fiscal situation of States. The terms of reference of the committee includes, *inter-alia*, recommendations for reducing the debt burden of States to sustainable levels and to recommend a feasible debt swap mechanism to supplement the efforts of the State towards fiscal consolidation. The committee is expected to submit its report by 30th September, 2002.